

NORTH KERN STATE PRISON

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

On November 16, 2009, the Law and Justice Committee (Committee) of the 2009-2010 Kern County Grand Jury visited the North Kern State Prison (NKSP) to inquire into the condition and management of the facility according to Penal Code §919(b).

PROCESS:

The Committee met with the Public Information Officer (PIO) and the Litigation Coordinator. The Committee was taken on a tour consisting of the Reception Center, main kitchen facility, medical and pharmacy facilities, exercise yards and various cell blocks. Following the tour the Committee met with the Acting Warden and the Management Staff for a brief question and answer session.

BACKGROUND:

North Kern State Prison is located at 2737 Cecil Avenue, Delano. The prison was built in 1993 to be a single cell facility and shortly after opening was changed to a Reception Center. NKSP processes approximately 500 incoming and outgoing inmates per week.

FINDINGS:

1. The NKSP Records Section manually processes approximately 1,000 inmate files per week. The NKSP is in the process of converting to paperless inmate computer files. No estimated date of completion has been established.
2. Currently all vocational and substance abuse programs have been eliminated due to State budget constraints. No job losses have occurred; affected personnel have been re-assigned to other areas.
3. The main kitchen prepares all meals fresh daily. Meals are then trucked to satellite kitchens and put on carts to be transported to all cell blocks and served in the day rooms.
4. NKSP has approximately 1,700 employees of which approximately 1,000 are correctional staff. The remaining employees are in Administration and Medical sections. NKSP provides a gym on site for use by all employees.
5. Inmates in all cell blocks have access to the exercise yards for two hours twice a week.

6. Visiting is allowed on Saturday and Sundays and designated holidays from 7am to 3pm.
7. NKSP offers services for approximately thirty different religious programs for the inmates to attend.
8. Population of the prison averages 5,300 at any given time; 280 are general population and are permanently housed at the facility.
9. The pharmacy has converted to the “Guardian” medication program through the State and follows the inmates throughout the prison system.

COMMENTS:

The Law and Justice Committee commends the PIO and Litigation Coordinator for the professionalism, knowledge and courtesy they showed the committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

North Kern State Prison should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.

Note: Present and past Kern County Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the Kern County Grand Jury website: www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury.

Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at www.co.kern.ca.us/grandjury, click on: Sign up for early releases

NO RESPONSE REQUIRED